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ABSTRACT

Standards are briefly outlined for four general areas. Administrative areas addressed are policies and procedures, legal basis, planning reports--statistical and narrative, budget, funding, personnel (personnel policies and procedures, positions and responsibilities, staff size, training and performance, job description, affirmative action, training and instruction, and volunteers), relationships with other libraries and agencies (sharing information, coordination of services, liaison activities and public education, directories of other agencies, and contacts with library schools), and physical facilities (the interior). Resource development areas include selection of materials, copyright, annotated bibliographies, titles produced, collection maintenance, quality control, technical and qualitative criteria, reproduction of titles and copies (cassette, braille, and large type), and collection maintenance. User service standards address user needs, temporary service, responsibility to users, registration, circulation (lending policies and system design), interlibrary loan, referral services, equipment (demonstration equipment and services), communication with users, reader advisory service, and measuring user satisfaction. Finally, the area of public education and information covers active liaison, programs, newsletters, and the reference collection. A glossary is provided. (LMM)

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Approved Recommendations on Working Out National Standards of Library Service for the Blind

Section of Libraries for the Blind
International Federation of Library Associations

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

1. Administration

Library and information service to blind individuals shall be administered by agencies that are responsive to user needs and that are capable of offering the full range of services as described in the following standards, and ideally are in the position of being able to assume responsibility for cooperative efforts established with their counterpart agencies in other countries.

1.1 Policies and Procedures

1. Library and information service for blind persons should be directed according to specific written policies and should include a mission statement. The administrative head of each library shall assume the responsibility for ensuring that such policies and procedures are written and implemented.

2. Policies and procedures shall be designed to meet service goals in the most efficient manner possible.

1.2 Legal Basis

The legal basis for the existence of each unit shall be clearly defined in appropriate statutes, codes, or ordinances. The agency responsible for library and information service to the blind should continuously review national and local laws to ensure recognition of the agency or library's educational function, and to provide for continuing adequate financing.

Legal authorization should encourage cooperative services across international borders through participation in conferences leading to the formulation of treaties, agreements, or compacts and to facilitate their cooperative implementation.

1.3 Planning

Formulation of Objectives. The library for the blind shall develop an explicit statement of its objectives in accordance with the goals and purposes of its administering agency. The administrative staff shall reexamine current programs on an annual basis to determine their effectiveness and their appropriateness in meeting stated organizational goals and objectives.

Each library shall formulate a long-range plan which reflects the needs of users and takes into account current trends in the field, developing technology, and related programs. The library shall evaluate progress toward achieving goals, and the plan shall be revised in the light of new and updated information.

1.4 Reports—Statistical and Narrative

Statistical records which document the use, services, and acquisitions of the library shall be kept. Successful planning requires a continuous backup of reliable information and can be used to advantage when justifying programs or budgets before appropriating agencies or individuals.

Such statistics should be interpreted and published in narrative and tabular forms so as to make available to all appropriate agencies and organizations pertinent information concerning library resources for the blind, and to provide information needed for use in research and library development planning.

1.5 Budget

The head of each library shall be on the same administrative level as comparable major unit heads within the administering agency, and shall be entrusted with planning and administering the unit budget as well as with presenting directly or justifying the budget to all appropriation or funding groups or individuals.

1.6 Funding

Since the funds provided will have great effect upon the quality of the library resources and

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Note: For the purpose of these recommendations, the word "shall" is to be understood as a minimum diagnostic standard. The word "should" indicates a recommendation.

services, financial planning is not only essential, but requires the commitment of resources sufficient to meet current objectives and standards. Funding must be assured on an ongoing basis.

1.7 Personnel

The organization of the library shall be logical and efficient; lines of authority shall be clearly drawn.

1.7.1 Personnel Policies and Procedures

Personnel policies and procedures shall be defined to provide proper channels of communication within the library. Personnel policies shall be written.

Two-way communication between the administrators and staff members shall be maintained.

1.7.2 Positions and Responsibilities

A library should have an administrative head supported by as many additional professional librarians, library associates, technical assistants, and clerks as are required.

1.7.3 Size of Staff

Many variables govern the size of the staff such as population, area served, and the service program of the library. The levels and number of staff shall be defined by normal library processes existing in each system.

1.7.4 Training and Performance

The staff shall satisfy the requirements of their positions in terms of training and performance. Progressive personnel practices shall be pursued with all appointments and promotions based on an evaluation of individual capabilities.

1.7.5 Job Description

For each position a job description shall be developed, in cooperation with the staff member concerned, and made available to all. An organizational chart showing the functions of each position and its place in the library will be available.

1.7.6 Affirmative Action

Every effort shall be made to employ blind and other handicapped persons whose training, experience, and abilities meet the requirements of the position in question.

1.7.7 Training and Instruction

There shall be a planned, formal orientation period for all new employees.

In-service training shall be provided and continuing education encouraged.

1.7.8 Volunteers

Volunteers, if properly used, are a valuable resource. They offer a variety of talents and can provide help to all libraries in extending and enriching service. For example, they may be used to examine all audio books prior to circulation.

Appropriate instruction and in-service training shall be provided.

1.8 Relationships with Other Libraries and Agencies

1.8.1 Sharing Information

Libraries shall cooperate with other libraries and agencies to provide blind persons with a broad and rich variety of reading material and information.

1.8.2 Coordination of Services

Libraries shall coordinate their services with those of other agencies serving users, including public libraries, schools, rehabilitation agencies, residential groups, and hospitals.

1.8.3 Liaison Activities

Appropriate staff members shall maintain liaison with and become active members of library and other professional organizations. Staff should support and participate in relevant conferences.

Through workshops, meetings, and informal situations, contacts with staff of allied agencies and professional groups shall be made. This will provide information about other resources for users and feedback on user needs and problems. It will also provide opportunities for cooperative programming.

1.8.4 Public Education

The staffs of libraries shall be familiar with other agencies and organizations providing services which are needed by library users and shall make library users aware of the availability of such services.

1.8.5 Directories of Other Agencies

Libraries shall maintain an updated mailing list of related agencies, support service organizations, service clubs, volunteers, other libraries, and professional groups in allied fields.

1.8.6 Contacts with Library Schools

Libraries should develop a close relationship with library schools and other schools that teach library courses related to persons with disabilities.

1.9 Physical Facilities

The location and organization of the physical facility play an important role in determining the scope of activities and the effective implementation of the program.

All buildings shall be accessible to handicapped individuals.

1.9.1 The Interior

1. A library should be climate controlled to provide an environment that will enable staff to work efficiently and provide the best possible ease of service to users who desire to conduct their own research and reading on the premises.

2. A library shall provide space for efficient shelving and for effective working conditions.

3. Special lighting shall be provided to assist persons with low vision.

2. Resource Development

The library serving blind persons shall provide library materials in special formats and the equipment needed to use them for blind individuals unable to read conventional print.

1. Libraries shall initiate and encourage research relating to library materials, equipment, services, and to the information needs of blind persons.

2. The results of all research should be shared with appropriate agencies, regardless of location.

2.1 Selection of Materials

Each library shall have a written statement of policy for selection and maintenance of its collections. Selection policies shall reflect the reading priorities of users and the principle of the freedom to read.

2.2 Copyright

Permission to produce copyrighted materials shall be secured for all publications to be produced in special media.

2.3 Annotated Bibliographies

Bibliographies shall be produced in braille, recorded, and large-type formats.

2.4 Titles Produced

The library shall have a sufficient number of copies of any title produced in sufficient quantity to fill requests in a responsive manner.

2.5 Collection Maintenance

Sufficient copies of titles produced shall be retained to fill current and future requests of users.

2.6 Quality Control

The library shall observe and promote high standards in the production of materials and equipment. This should include a high standard in ease of use of equipment and materials.

2.7 Technical and Qualititative Criteria

Titles inaccurately transcribed or narrated, or for which there is evidence that voices or interpretations are frequently considered to be displeasing to users of the service, should be withdrawn.

2.8 Reproduction of Titles and Copies

2.8.1 Cassette

Libraries shall purchase and maintain high-speed tape duplication equipment with minimum capability to produce cassette-to-cassette. Recorded masters and submasters shall never be circulated.

2.8.2 Braille

Libraries shall have access to brailling and copying equipment for the production and reproduction of braille.

2.8.3 Large Type

Each library should have the capability to produce large-type materials.

Large-type masters shall be retained in a form suitable for copying on request.

2.9 Maintenance of Collections

All network libraries shall systematically review shelves and files, examine materials for damage or loss, repair or replace damaged or lost materials, and weed the collection ensuring that adequate copies are kept to meet demand.

3. Service to Users

It is the aim of librarians serving blind and physically handicapped readers that users of libraries shall have access to services equivalent in extent and quality to that available to the general population.

3.1 User Needs

Every effort shall be made to ensure that users receive library and information service which is satisfactory in terms of their individual desires including the quantity of books loaned.

1. Users who so desire shall receive books only when they specifically ask for them.

2. Special requests and materials replacing those returned shall leave the library in the next workday's mailing.

3. Calendar service shall adhere to a predetermined schedule.

4. All materials returned to the library shall be inspected and available for use within one workday after inspection.

3.2 Temporary Service

Libraries shall promote the use of service by persons eligible to participate in the program because of a temporary disability. This service shall be of the same quality as that provided regular users.

3.3 Responsibility to Users

1. Users shall have convenient access to reading materials to meet educational, informational, recreational, vocational, and self-development needs.

2. Users shall have telephone access to the library.

3. Users shall be encouraged to visit the library. Hours of service should be scheduled to accommodate their needs—including evenings and weekends.

4. Users shall be informed of service policies and procedures and be notified of any major changes that will affect them.

5. Circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users shall be confidential.

3.4 Registration

Any person or agency who requests service and is certified as eligible shall be entitled to service and shall be registered. A registration system, whether manual or automated, shall have the capability of storing and retrieving basic data concerning the user that are relevant to the user's needs.

Library service shall be initiated as soon as possible after registration procedures are completed.

3.5 Circulation of Equipment and Materials

The organization, efficiency, and integrity of the registration and circulation function are of crucial importance and have top priority with users. Design of registration and circulation systems shall include a prompt response to the needs of the user and access to all possible sources for the materials requested.

3.5.1 Lending Policies

Lending policies shall take into account the special living conditions of users so that they will not be reluctant to use services because of fear of damaging or losing equipment or materials. Loan periods shall be flexible and within resources available.

3.5.2 System Design

The design of a circulation system, whether manual or automated, shall have the capability of storing and retrieving basic data input concerning the user and the library collection.

3.6 Interlibrary Loan

All libraries shall establish reserve and interlibrary loan systems to ensure the user's access to desired materials.

3.7 Referral Services

Libraries shall respond to user requests for materials and information, either from their own resources, where this is possible, or by referral to other libraries.

The library shall refer users to an agency which produces materials or make every effort to produce the needed material in a format which is acceptable to the user if it is not already available or cannot be obtained in time to meet the user's needs.

3.8 Equipment

3.8.1 Demonstration Equipment

Libraries should acquire demonstration equipment developed for blind persons, such as vision aids, page turners, braille writing tools, and large-type numbers for telephones, or arrange for such demonstrations to be available.

3.8.2 Demonstration Services

Where agencies have equipment and collections of materials which they use for demonstration

and service to their clients, the library shall require them to appoint one or more trained staff members to be responsible for the service.

3.9 Communication with Users

Close and regular contact with users is essential to ensure effective library service.

1. Libraries shall provide a personalized and friendly library atmosphere.

2. Libraries shall maintain active communication with users.
   a. Library staff and administrators shall be available for consultation.
   b. Records of communication from users and of staff response shall be reviewed periodically by senior staff to ensure effective action is taken.

3.10 Reader Advisory Service

Libraries shall advise readers about the availability, content, and nature of materials.

3.10.1 Formal and Informal Instruction

Library staff members shall provide formal and informal instruction to groups and individuals on the policies of the library, and the proper procedures for using the library and other sources of information.

3.10.2 Response to Users

Libraries shall answer users' queries or requests using the format that was agreed on when the request was made.

3.11 Measuring User Satisfaction

Provision shall be made for continuous feedback from users concerning their satisfaction with services. The following are examples of methods that can be used:

Surveys;
Meetings with organized user groups;
Regularly scheduled user forums; and
Encouraging users to report specific problems or to make suggestions.

3.11.1 Input

1. Analysis of Changing Factors and Trends. Libraries shall operate as open systems, soliciting maximum input from users as well as fr[illegible]ofessional, governmental, and voluntee; groups.
2. User Comment Program. Each library shall have an advisory committee including users of the library or conduct a regular survey of consumer needs.

3.11.2 Studies

Studies should be made to evaluate the effectiveness of service and to determine what service might be instituted to make the program more relevant.

4. Public Education and Information

All libraries shall assume responsibility for interpreting services to their community and for promoting a climate of public opinion and awareness favorable to program development, expansion, and improvement. This should be done cooperatively with other libraries when appropriate.

4.1 Active Liaison

Libraries shall maintain an active liaison with related organizations and individuals.

Librarians shall seek opportunities to interpret services to educators engaged in programs which provide the least restrictive educational environment.

Librarians shall assume active roles as advocates of library services to blind persons.

4.2 Programs

The library should encourage users to participate in programs such as book talks, discussion groups, story hours, summer reading programs, and special program events in other appropriate agencies.

4.3 Newsletters

Libraries shall produce newsletters at regular intervals.

4.4 Reference Collection

Librarians shall have access to standard library reference works and to literature in the fields of blindness and physical handicaps as well as access to a general library print collection. Such collections will be made available to those working in, or students of, the field of blindness, as well as to the general public. Reference and information services in the fields of blindness and physical handicaps are a public service and can be a means of promoting library services.

GLOSSARY

Access. Freedom or ability to obtain or make use of.

Accessories. Equipment such as headphones and remote or special control devices used with talking book and cassette machines.

Agency. A public or private organization providing some form of service for blind individuals.

Archival. Preserved for historical record.

Bibliographic control. Standard cataloging rules used for description of library materials together with information that indicates where such materials are located.

Borrower. (*See* User.)

Braille. A system devised by Louis Braille of embossing or transcribing for the blind in which the characters are represented by raised dots. It is graded according to the number of contractions used.

Grade 1 - Letter by letter; no contractions.
Grade 1½ - Slightly contracted.
Grade 2 - Moderately contracted.
Grade 3 - Highly contracted.
Jumbo - Enlarged dots and increased spacing.
Micro - Small dots and decreased spacing.

Braille slate. A device for embossing braille by hand.

Braille stylus. A pointed instrument for punching braille dots on a braille slate.

Braillewriter. A device for embossing braille by hand at a faster rate than that possible when using a braille slate.

Calendar service. Book service scheduled for a specific time.

Catalog. A list of books arranged according to a definite plan which records resources of a collection, a library, or a group of libraries.

Circulation. The loan cycle of material from a library to the user and back. The number of items loaned during a given period of time is also termed *the circulation*.

Container. A box, envelope, pouch, satchel, or basket manufactured to store and ship items which make up a copy of a title. Corresponds to *volume* for braille. Used as a unit of measure for statistics of the circulation of discs or tapes.

Format. The layout and rules for transcribing material in various media and the physical means used, e.g., cassette.

Inspect. To check book containers for completeness, order, damage, and foreign matter.

Large type. Material printed in 14-point or larger type.

Limited-production material. Titles produced in fewer than three copies are termed limited-production material and provide supplementary titles to meet specialized demand.

Machine. Playback equipment for talking books on disc or cassette.

Master. The original transcription of braille or recorded materials from which copies are produced.

Medium. Mode of transcription; braille, recording, and large type. The term *special media* is a collective one for all these together as opposed to the print from which they are transcribed. (*See also* Format.)

Monitor. A person who directs the recording of materials in cooperation with the narrator. (*See* Narrator.) Operates the recording equipment and may hold copy and correct errors. (*See* Proofreader, Reviewer.)

Moon. A system of printing for the blind devised by Dr. William Moon which uses stylized raised characters based upon the Roman alphabet.

Narrator. A person who reads into a microphone to record material on magnetic tape.

Open reel. Reel-to-reel tape as opposed to a quick-loading type such as the cassette.

Open system. A system exposed to general knowledge and influence; no concealment or restriction in participation. Reactive to feedback.

Outreach services. Library and information programs that seek out potential users, particularly those who do not or cannot make use of traditional library service or materials; examples include bookmobile service, service to the homebound, books by mail, service to hospitals and institutions, publicity, and community awareness programs.

Pre-timed tape. Tape measured in minutes to allow timing for the recording of tape masters.

Print/braille. A format that uses print and braille in parallel.

Processing. Clerical procedures to prepare materials for circulation.

Program. A plan of service.

Proofreader. A person who reads braille proofs and indicates errors. (*See* Monitor.)

Quality control. Standards and procedures which ensure that recorded and braille materials meet specifications for format, accuracy, and mechanical reproduction.

Quantity (production). Titles in the basic book collections are said to be produced in quantity when a sufficient number of copies are provided to meet a wide, general demand from users. (*See also* Limited-production material.)

Reissue. A second or repeated issue of a recorded or braille book using the original as a master.

Reviewer. A person who verifies the accuracy of recorded material and technical appropriateness of completed recordings of print material. (*See* Monitor, Proofreader.)

Rpm. Revolutions per minute.

Selection. A book title chosen to fill a user's request or a substitute sent to keep a user supplied with books if no specific requests are on hand at the time books are sent. The latter service is given with the permission and wish of the user.

Slave. Single or multiple unit duplicating recorded material from master tape at high speed.

Special interest organization. An agency organized to provide certain services, for example, brailling and recording religious materials.

Stack. Book or periodical storage unit composed of shelves supported by shelf supports which may be either the full width of the shelves or compact central columns.

Standard. A rule or model of quantity, quality, extent, level, or correctness. Diagnostic or benchmark standards are based upon a model of the conditions in libraries known to be providing superior services, which are then used by other institutions in self-evaluation. Prescriptive standards are designed to provide guidelines for the development of normal service.

Storage area. That portion of the total floor space of the library allocated to the storage of materials, supplies, and equipment not in immediate use.

Submaster. First generation copy of a master tape; used to duplicate circulating copies, or made available to other libraries for duplicating.

Talking book. A recording of print material on disc or cassette tape produced for use by blind and physically handicapped readers.

Thermoform. A heat-vacuum procedure for duplicating pages of braille.

Title. The distinguishing name of a written, printed, or spoken work. By extension, the term is used to denote the work in general as differentiated from the variable number of copies of a book or magazine.

Transcriber. A person engaged in making a braille or large-type copy of printed material.

User. A registered individual or an individual listed as eligible by an agency through which the user receives library service. A user may borrow in more than one medium.

Vision aid. An aid for seeing such as a magnifier.

Weed. To discard or transfer to storage superfluous copies or rarely used books and materials no longer in active use.

Withdrawal. The process of removing from library records all entries for a book no longer in the library collection.

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